

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,  
Dubuque  
Dubuque County  
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160

HABS  
IOWA,  
31-DUBU,  
13 -

DRAWINGS

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

## Commercial and Industrial Buildings

HABS No. IA-160

**Site Location:** irregularly shaped highway corridor, bounded on the north by 12th Street, the west by Locust Street, the east by White Street and the south by Railroad Avenue. Buildings located on Main, Jones, Shields, Harrison, Iowa, White, Washington, Jackson, Central and Locust streets between 1st and 12th streets.  
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa  
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque South, Iowa 7.5' (1955), and Dubuque North, Iowa (1956) 7.5'

**Present Owner:** various (see individual site data)  
**Present Usage:** various (see individual site data)  
**Present Condition :** good / poor

**Construction Date :** 1857 - 1948

**Architecture style:** one- to seven-story 19th and 20th Century Functional

**Significance:** The sixty-nine buildings documented here comprise a large portion of the commercial and industrial district located in the southeast section of the riverport city of Dubuque, Iowa. Built over an extended period in a thirty-block area straddling the railroads' main lines through the city, the buildings house a diversity of uses. These include commercial blocks, factories, warehouses, railroad passenger and freight depots, meat packing plants, automobile showrooms, powerhouses and hotels. Although the study area has evolved greatly from its beginnings in the 1830s, it has remained generally consistent in its use through the historical growth of Dubuque. Today, the area presents a heterogeneous, but cohesive, collection of late 19th and early 20th century structures that relate to Dubuque's commercial, industrial and transportation development. The area now faces serious impact from highway construction proposed by the Iowa Department of Transportation. As a result of this construction, many of the buildings will be razed and the composition of the district altered irreparably.

**Compiler:** Clayton B. Fraser, Fraserdesign, Loveland Colorado.  
March 1989.

## Overview

The sixty-nine buildings and structures included as part of this documentation comprise a large portion of the commercial and industrial district located in the southeast section of the riverport city of Dubuque, Iowa. Bounded on the north by 12th Street, the west by Locust Street, the east by White Street and the south by Railroad Avenue, this irregularly shaped study area forms the approximate corridor for the proposed new route of U.S. Highway 61 through the city. The area has evolved greatly from its beginnings in the 1830s, but has remained generally consistent in its use through the historical growth of Dubuque. Today, the study area presents a heterogeneous, but cohesive, collection of late 19th and early 20th structures that relate to Dubuque's commercial, industrial and transportation development.

The region which would eventually become the city of Dubuque was first settled by lead miners in 1833. One of the first commercial businesses established in the fledgling settlement was a ferry operation on the Mississippi River, founded by General George W. Jones. The ferry docked at the city levee between First and Sixth streets. Later, another ferry plied the river between Dubuque and Dunleith (now East Dubuque), Illinois, hauling freight, livestock and passengers across the river. In 1850 Augustus and Charles Gregoire operated the city's first steam ferry, docking near the current intersection of Fourth and White streets; Timothy Fanning ran a second line, docking the boat behind his saloon near present-day First and Iowa streets.

The first railroad to enter Dubuque was the Dubuque and Pacific in 1856, the same year that Dubuque was designated a port of entry by the federal government. Other rail lines later extended tracks into the city, including the Burlington and Northern (a subsidiary of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy system), the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul and the Illinois Central. As river trade increased and railroad service into the town expanded, Dubuque's population grew substantially in the 1850s. Between 1833 and 1860, the town developed from a rough mining camp to a major riverport with a population of about 13,000 people. The new townspeople brought with them increased commerce and the need for greater services and manufacturing facilities. One noteworthy structure in the survey area associated with this initial surge of commercial development is the American House Hotel [HABS No. IA-160-P], built near the rail yards in 1857 as a commercial grade lodge.

The location of the ferry terminals and rail yards on the original Mississippi River levee had the effect of directing commercial development to an area between First and Sixth streets. Dubuque was laid out using the traditional gridiron, oriented approximately to the cardinal points. The primary north-south thoroughfare was unsurprisingly named Main Street; this formed the heart

of the town's central business district. By 1857 business buildings covered a four-block-wide area from First to Seventh streets. That year a local newspaper editor proclaimed:

The buildings that are going up in the various parts of our city are of a superior character, much surpassing those constructed in previous years; and should the balance of the great number already under contract prove to be of the same description, they will greatly enhance the beauty of our city, and will challenge comparison with the architecture of any city in the West.

During this time, mills for three types of processing - flour, lumber and iron - were erected in the emerging industrial district near the railroad tracks east of Main, along Jackson, Washington and Iowa streets. Nadeau and Rogers located the Dubuque City Flour Mill on the corner of Third and Iowa streets in the 1840s, followed soon after by the Key City Mill. By 1858 seven lumber planing mills had been built in the city, two of which operated on the corner of Seventh and Jackson streets. And by 1860 early Dubuque iron foundries such as Cummings, Matthews and Company and Rouse and Williams were in operation. The latter firm was founded in 1851 by Hammond Rouse and Jesse Farley as Farley, Rouse and Company. Later reorganized as Rouse and Williams and eventually known as the Iowa Iron Works, the foundry produced engines, boilers, steam fittings, heavy steamboat castings, mill equipment and architectural cast iron columns and storefronts from a plant located on the corner of Ninth and Washington streets. One structure, the brick-clad Blacksmith Shop [HABS No. IA-160-AR] remains from the original complex, in greatly altered form. Other industries had by then taken root in the city, and Dubuque manufacturers in 1858 produced wagons and carriages, furniture, vinegar, leather and hides, agricultural implements, white lead and rifle shot.

Industrial and commercial growth continued in Dubuque through the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s. The city gained regional prominence, not only for its production industries, but as a major wholesale supply point along the Mississippi River. At this time, masonry commercial blocks were constructed along Main Street (and to a lesser extent Clay (now Central) and Iowa streets) to house Dubuque's more prominent manufacturers and jobbing houses. As hundreds of new firms began operations, some of the city's earliest manufactories expanded into national markets. The major industries, as reported in an 1886 gazetteer, included:

Lumber, lath, shingles	\$4,866,018	Pork packing	\$5,523,200
Liquors	\$1,384,121	Furniture	\$ 309,212
Iron works	\$3,510,106	Clothing	\$1,899,823
Foundries, mach. shops	\$ 501,178	Harness, saddlery	\$ 802,385
Brick yards	\$ 520,740	Wagons and carriages	\$1,614,211
Sash, doors, planing	\$1,041,118	Boatmaking and repair	\$ 453,469

Completion of the Dubuque-Dunleith wagon bridge over the Mississippi River in 1887 (immediately adjacent from the existing railroad bridge) placed lower Main Street near a major transportation portal into the city. A market district formed almost immediately, as the city's largest wholesale grocers and produce handlers soon moved their operations to the area. The first important building erected to support the district was the Bishop's Block [HABS No. IA-160-BA], built on the corner of First and Main as the bridge was nearing completion in 1887. This five-story brick warehouse initially housed the M.M. Walker Company, one of Dubuque's earliest wholesale grocers, and later the John T. Hancock Company, another wholesale grocery firm. In 1894 Walker and the Schroeder-Kleine Grocer Company built matching brick warehouses [HABS Nos. IA-160-BI and IA-160-BJ] a block south of the Bishop's Block. At about this time, Thomas Mulgrew [HABS No. IA-160-BK] began a coal supply business alongside the railroad tracks south of the new Walker building.

Fed by lumber from the hardwood forests of Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin, Dubuque's millworking industry burgeoned in the 1880s and 1890s to the point that the city became a nationally important supplier. The two most important woodworking houses to emerge in the 19th century were the Carr, Ryder and Adams and Company and the Farley and Loetscher Manufacturing Company. Many of the buildings in the study area were constructed by these two firms.

William W. Carr arrived in Dubuque from New York in 1862. Four years later he joined with Woodberry H. Austin to form Carr and Austin, a woodwork producer. Carr and Austin initially employed two men, and as the business grew, the partners hired more employees and expanded the physical plant. They operated from a three-story brick factory connected to a three-story frame warehouse by an overhead bridge at the foot of Main Street, until this burned in 1871. The company, which had then grown to 15 men, moved to a new factory on Iowa Street. When this, too, was destroyed by fire in 1879, Carr and Austin purchased the Patch and Waite Sash, Door and Blind Company and Planing Mills on Jackson Street between Ninth and Tenth. With the latter company, Carr acquired a three-story brick factory building [HABS No. IA-160-AM], constructed in 1868. Soon after the move, Austin sold his interest in the firm to Carr, and it became known simply as W.W. Carr and Company.

The following year, Carr took on two new partners, Noble C. Ryder and W.C. Wheeler. The company was again renamed, this time to Carr, Ryder and Wheeler. As the millwork manufacturer grew, it added onto the factory building, eventually occupying the entire city block between Ninth and Tenth streets. "It took thirty-three years for company buildings to cover the remainder of the initial square block," a company history later stated. "In fact, there is some unroofed space near the center even now, in addition to the inner two hundred feet of alley."

Business boomed in the 1880s and 1890s. In 1887 the firm was worth \$125 million; in 1895, \$300 million. Renamed Carr, Ryder and Adams, the company opened branch plants in Omaha, Nebraska (1892); Des Moines, Iowa (1897); Peoria, Illinois (1898); Indianapolis, Indiana (1903); Toledo, Ohio (1904); Minneapolis, Minnesota (1910); St. Joseph, Missouri (1913); and St. Louis, Missouri (1916). As business continued to expand after the turn of the century, the company also acquired other buildings and built new ancillary structures for its main plant in Dubuque. These latter structures include the Powerhouse [HABS No. IA-160-AF; 1910], the Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-AP; 1911], the Office Building [HABS No. IA-160-AO; 1916], and the Factory and Warehouse Annex [HABS No. IA-160-AN; 1924]. Eventually, the Carr, Ryder and Adams Company owned some 45 buildings in Dubuque before selling most of its holdings in the 1960s and early 1970s. Now functioning under name of CarAdCo, the firm still produces sash, doors and woodwork, but at a capacity greatly reduced from its heyday earlier in the century.

As W.W. Carr was in his initial stage of growth in 1875, Christian Loetscher formed a rival woodworking company, first renting the second floor of the Key City Planing Mill for his modest operation. Three years later he joined with Jesse P. Farley, an early Dubuque entrepreneur; in 1881 they incorporated as the Farley and Loetscher Manufacturing Company. In 1882 the company built its first factory structure on the corner of Eighth and Jackson streets (since razed). Like the Carr company, Farley and Loetscher experienced tremendous growth at the end of the 19th century. Over the forty years between 1885 and 1925 the firm's complex grew to cover five city blocks. Farley and Loetscher eventually became the largest sash and door plant in the world, with branch plants in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Des Moines, Iowa, in addition to its sprawling Dubuque complex. By the 1950s, however, Farley and Loetscher had been overshadowed by its principal rival, Carr, Ryder and Adams. The company ceased operations about 1959. Several major factory and warehouse structures remain from the Farley complex in Dubuque, including two factories [HABS No. IA-160-AD; 1903 and HABS No. IA-160-AC; 1909], the Factory and Warehouse Annex [HABS No. IA-160-AG; 1917], the Lumber Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-AH; 1906], and the Powerhouse [HABS No. IA-160-AI; 1948].

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The streetscapes of the study area are unified visually by the similarity in scale, configuration, orientation and materials of the buildings. As the historic heart of Dubuque commerce, Main Street features some of the city's most architecturally ostentatious commercial blocks. Built in the late 19th

and early 20th centuries, the Main Street commercial structures are predominantly wood frame, one- to five-stories tall, with brick exterior walls and flat, parapeted roofs. They abut the sidewalks directly and are typically joined with adjacent structures by common party walls. These buildings range stylistically from Classical Revival (the Orpheum Theatre; 1910) to Italianate (the O'Neill Block; 1870, and the Cooper Building; 1868) to Renaissance Revival (the German Bank; 1901). Most have undergone renovations of their street-level storefronts, but the upper levels have survived largely unaltered.

Lower Main Street, only a block removed from the central business district, features commercial buildings, factories and warehouses that are generally smaller and more austere than those further north on Main Street. The Bishop's Block [HABS No. IA-160-BA; 1887], located on the corner of First and Main, forms the transition between the commercial district on Main Street and the warehouse district on lower Main. It combines the scale and massing of the Main Street business blocks with the more austere detailing of the lower Main warehouses. Abutting the sidewalk and joined by common brick party walls, these small- to medium-scale brick structures range from one to five stories in height. Their facades display typical configuration, with large storefront openings on the street level and smaller, double-hung windows on the upper level(s). The Bennett House Hotel [HABS No. IA-160-BB; 1877, 1883] is typical of these relatively simple structures, with its pressed metal cornice, full-width cast iron storefront and segmental-arched upper floor windows. The Schroeder-Kleine Grocer Company Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-BI] and the M.M. Walker Company Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-BJ], two similar structures built side-by-side in 1894 on the corner of Main and Jones streets, reflect the high-style architecture of Main Street more than their more utilitarian neighbors in the market district of lower Main Street. Like the lower Main Street buildings, the commercial blocks along Central Avenue are more modest than those along Main Street, demonstrating their secondary-street status. The American House Hotel [HABS No. IA-160-P], one of the oldest surviving buildings on Central Avenue, is typical of these structures.

Architectural pretension is generally lacking in the industrial areas of Jackson, Washington and White streets. Here, the two- to four-story factories and warehouses form an architecturally cohesive district. The buildings abut the sidewalks directly and are distinguished by massive block footprints with few projections other than canopies over loading docks, common brick exterior walls with modest pilasters and corbeling at cornice level, rows or banks of wood double-hung windows, and large, garage-type doorways. The roofs of these structures are typically flat and covered with composition roofing, with brick parapets, although a few gable-roofed buildings (such as the Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Powerhouse [HABS No. IA-160-AF; 1910]) are found in the district.

The buildings rarely display distinguishing architectural elements that tie them with any particular styles, and they are best described stylistically as 19th and 20th Century Functional. The Key City Iron Works Foundry [HABS No. IA-160-AK; 1890], Dubuque Paper Company Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-N; 1913], Herancourt Furniture Company Factory [HABS No. IA-160-AW; c.1860, 1922], Key City Electric Street Railway Company Powerhouse and Storage Barn [HABS No. IA-160-AT; 1889], Dubuque Seed Company Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-I; 1885], and the Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Factory and Warehouse Annex [HABS No. IA-160-AN; 1924] all typify the simply massed and detailed factory architecture of this district. Some more high-style examples can be found in the study area, notably the the Bell Block [HABS No. IA-160-S; 1892], a three-story Italianate building, and the Becker-Hazelton Company Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-L; 1914], a seven-story Chicago Commercial style building. In reality, these latter two differ from the functional-style structures only by degree.

The buildings in the study area generally follow national structural trends, with little technological innovation evident. Red brick, laid in common bond up to four wythes thick, is used for exterior bearing walls and interior fire walls for virtually all of the structures. The 19th century buildings feature wood frame construction, either heavy timber or light frame, depending on building size and use. The heavy timbered warehouses and factories feature typical post-and-beam construction, with massive wood columns and beams joined by timber or cast iron bearing blocks. The Bishop's Block [HABS No. IA-160-BA; 1887] typifies the post-and-beam warehouse in Dubuque, with its square timber columns on the upper floors and cylindrical iron columns on the lower floors, where the combined weight of the floors above exceeded timber's bearing capacity. With its relatively short-span room requirements, the American House Hotel [HABS No. IA-160-P; 1857, 1874] is a typical example of light wood frame construction, using a brick bearing perimeter and dimensional lumber interior bearing walls to support lumber floor and ceiling joists. A few of the early buildings employed timber/iron trusses to support their roofs between bearing walls without intermediate columns. Perhaps the most noteworthy example of 19th century trussed roof construction in the study area is the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Freight Depot, [HABS No. IA-160-AA; 1874], which uses timber/iron, gabled Howe trusses to clear span 56 feet over the one-story warehouse section.

A handful of the buildings constructed in the study area after 1910 employ concrete frame technology - either flat-slab or post-and-beam. This was in part a direct response to several disastrous fires in Dubuque's industrial district at the time and in part a reflection of national construction trends. Pioneered by William Ward and Ernest Ransome, reinforced concrete was then gaining increasing acceptance as a structural material in America. Three

similar multi-story concrete frame warehouses are found in the study area: the Kretschmer Manufacturing Company Factory and Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-AL; 1912]; the Farley and Loetscher Manufacturing Company Factory and Warehouse Annex [HABS No. IA-160-AG; 1917]; and the Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-AP; 1918]. All three feature flat-slab floors, supported by evenly spaced rows of cylindrical concrete columns with steel-jacket-formed mushroom capitals. The McFadden Coffee and Spice Company Factory and Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-H; 1910] uses the more traditional post-and-beam construction, merely substituting concrete columns and beams for timber in a two-dimensional frame. Interestingly, all four of these buildings were constructed in the 1910s, during the period of great experimentation with reinforced concrete in the building trade. They did not foretell a lasting trend in Dubuque's industrial district, however, as later structures used timber, not concrete, for structural framing.

Despite infill by more recent buildings, Dubuque's commercial / industrial district displays a remarkable degree of cohesion in its historic building fabric. The structures are generally of such large scale and their use in many cases unchanged that the exterior changes they have undergone have been relatively minor. Few encroachments from contemporary structures have been made; the historic buildings that have undergone extensive exterior alterations have had little impact on the overall streetscapes. Most of the older buildings have suffered from decades of deferred maintenance and are now in need of extensive rehabilitation. More serious, however, is the impact to the study area that will result from highway construction proposed by the Iowa Department of Transportation. In preparation for this, many of the buildings will be razed and the complexion of the district altered irreparably.

On the following pages is a list of the resources included under HABS No. IA-160, giving site name, date of construction and Iowa Department of Transportation site number:

HABS No.	Site Name	Date	IDOT
IA-160-A	Illinois Central Railroad Passenger Depot	1888	1A.1
IA-160-B	International Harvester Co. Showroom, Warehouse	c1925	1A.4-5
IA-160-C	Maizewood Insulation Company Factory	1928	1A.15
IA-160-D	International Harvester Co. Truck Showroom, Garage	1929	1A.3
IA-160-E	Ambrose Gleed Malthouse	1874	2.19
IA-160-F	James Beach and Sons Company Factory and Warehouse	1911	2.20-21
IA-160-G	Illinois Central Railroad Freight Depot	1873	7.1
IA-160-H	McFadden Coffee and Spice Company Factory, Warehouse	1910	7.2
IA-160-I	Dubuque Seed Company Warehouse	1885	7.3

HABS No.	Site Name	Date	IDOT
IA-160-J	Karigan's Restaurant	1948	7.6
IA-160-K	Armour and Company Meat Packing Plant	1910	7.8
IA-160-L	Becker-Hazelton Company Warehouse	1915	7.9
IA-160-M	260 Iowa Street	1931	7.10
IA-160-N	Dubuque Paper Company Warehouse	1914	7.11
IA-160-O	Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul RR Passenger Depot	1882	7.12
IA-160-P	American House Hotel	1857	7.13-14
IA-160-Q	Reo Sales Company Showroom	c1927	7.15
IA-160-R	Bowman and Haley Garage	1923	7.16
IA-160-S	8ell Block	1892	7.17
IA-160-T	Fluckiger Motor Company Showroom	1917	7.18
IA-160-U	504 Central Avenue	1891	7.19
IA-160-V	Farley and Loetscher Manufac. Co. Lumber Warehouse	1934	7.24
IA-160-W	549-553 White Street	1920	7.25
IA-160-X	Kassler Motor Company Showroom	c1927	7.26
IA-160-Y	465 White Street	c1920	7.27
IA-160-Z	Chicago, Burlington and Northern RR Passenger Depot	1891	7.29
IA-160-AA	Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul RR Freight Depot	1874	7.35
IA-160-AB	Swift and Company Meat Processing Plant	1923	8.2
IA-160-AC	Farley and Loetscher Manufacturing Company Factory	1909	8.3
IA-160-AO	Farley and Loetscher Manufacturing Company Factory	1903	8.4
IA-160-AE	Dubuque Linseed Oil Paint Company Factory	c1880	8.5
IA-160-AF	Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Powerhouse	1910	8.6
IA-160-AG	Farley and Loetscher Man. Co. Factory, Warehse. Annex	1917	8.9
IA-160-AH	Farley and Loetscher Manufacturing Co. Lumber Warehse.	1906	8.10
IA-160-AI	Farley and Loetscher Manufacturing Company Powerhouse	1948	8.11
IA-160-AJ	Weineke-Hoerr Company Factory	1890	8.12
IA-160-AK	Key City Iron Works Foundry	1890	8.13-14
IA-160-AL	Kretschmer Manufacturing Company Factory, Warehouse	1912	8.17
IA-160-AM	Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Factory	1868	8.18
IA-160-AN	Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Factory, Warehse. Annex	1924	8.19
IA-160-AO	Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Office Building	1916	8.20
IA-160-AP	Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Warehouse	1911	8.24
IA-160-AQ	Dubuque Ice Harbor	1886	7.30
IA-160-AR	Iowa Iron Works Blacksmith Shop	1851	8.26
IA-160-AS	Klauer Manufacturing Company Factory	1912	8.27
IA-160-AT	Key City Electric Street Railway Co. Powerhouse, Barn	1889	8.28
IA-160-AU	Dubuque Oat Meal Mill Powerhouse	1882	8.29
IA-160-AV	Dubuque Water Company Pumphouse	1888	8.34
IA-160-AW	Herancourt Furniture Company Factory	c1860	8.38
IA-160-AX	Carr, Ryder and Adams Company Lumber Warehouses	1915	8.40
IA-160-AY	Key City Gas Company Warehouse	c1868	4.8

HABS No.	Site Name	Date	IDOT
IA-I60-AZ	Halpin Block	1882	4.22
IA-I60-BA	Bishop's Block	1887	5.23
IA-I60-BB	Bennett House Hotel	1877	5.22
IA-I60-BC	80 Main Street	1908	5.21
IA-I60-BD	76 Main Street	1922	5.20
IA-I60-BF	Jackson Vinegar Company Warehouse	1910	5.18
IA-I60-BG	Bush, Robison and Company Warehouse	1878	5.17
IA-I60-BH	56 Main Street	1878	5.16
IA-I60-BI	Schroeder-Kleine Grocer Company Warehouse	1894	5.15
IA-I60-BJ	M.M. Walker Company Warehouse	1894	5.14
IA-I60-BK	Thomas J. Mulgrew Company Office Building	1915	5.12
IA-I60-BL	Trausch Baking Company Bakery	1931	5.11
IA-I60-BM	Midland Laboratories Factory and Warehouse	1908	5.10
IA-I60-BN	Ede's Robe Tanning Company Factory	1906	5.9
IA-I60-BO	Peter Even and Son Auto Company Showroom	1916	5.6
IA-I60-BP	Joseph Motor Sales Company Showroom	c1925	5.5
IA-I60-BR	Flatiron Park	1858	5.13
IA-I60-BS	240-250 First Street	c1857	5.3

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